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🕒 June 24, 2020 👤 Laurinburg Exchange 📁 Letters 💬 0



Protest across the nation have shown a clear need for change not just in our governments but in our school systems, history books and communities.

While I do not condone vandalism, the defacing of the Hamilton McMillan statue by Old Main at UNC Pembroke represents a minute example of the ongoing struggle to administer balance and reconciliation in the Native American Community in North Carolina. Hamilton McMillan excavated several burial mounds in Robeson and adjoining counties and promoted the statewide name change of the Tuscarora people.

A series of historical newspapers, special Indian reports , genealogical reports, archaeological studies, and other primary and secondary sources uncover an immense operation to exterminate the Tuscarora People of Robeson County. Since 1778, NC State has openly resisted, oppressed, and marginalized the treaty rights, use of land, and identity of the Tuscarora Nation. In 1885 in both the Lenoir Topic and the Fayetteville Observer newspapers, Mr. McMillan was quoted speaking the words "...they were

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Tuscarora.” This quote was in relation to the Indians of Robeson County and their origins. Like the Harper’s Weekly Newspaper in 1872 and its detailed account of Henry Berry Lowery, Mr. McMillan plainly proclaimed that the Loweries, Locklears, Oxendines and their direct kin were the descendants of Tuscarora Indians from the Roanoke River region. When the Indian Removal Act was passed, a ratification of the NC Constitution prohibited the documentation of our Tuscarora ancestors as Indian in the census and other important records.

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Today, the Tuscarora have over 2,000 years of continued habitation of N.C. lands, with over 250 years of continued permanent settlement on the Drowning Creek. The desecration of dozens of documented burial mounds by Mr. McMillan and his supporters and colleagues showed no respect for the living and breathing Indian communities who called those counties home.

While the current administration at UNC Pembroke has been notified of the claims and grievances of the Tuscarora Nation, campus officials continue to ignore the simple facts and ongoing research that attempts to seek redress or reconciliation for the Tuscarora People.

The Tuscarora People, North Carolinians, and the general public deserve to know the full truth behind the historical leaders they so easily support and idolize. There were many families and community members involved in keeping the Normal School up and running. Meanwhile, Mr. McMillan was there to take the credit, power, and spirit from the Tuscarora People.

Donnie Red Hawk McDowell

Shannon



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